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## Join Jim Harrison on a culinary adventure

By VICTORIA DIAZ  
SPECIAL WRITER

### The Raw and the Cooked: Adventure of a Roving Gourmand

By Jim Harrison  
(Grove Press, \$26)

Frankly, I can't always tell what Jim Harrison is talking about, or where he's going with his words. However, in this collection of his food columns (which appeared in such magazines as Esquire, Men's Journal, and Smart), he's great fun to follow around, just to see where he'll lead us.

On these pages, he's like a loquacious dinner companion, holding forth on such diverse matters as curative foods ("the violent pasta dish ... puttanesca" will brush away boredom, and "for ... depression you must go to Rio ... and eat a roast slice from the hump of a Zebu bull"), hunting woodcock near his home in upper Michigan, dining on bear (the fat tastes a bit rancid), the delights of Zingerman's in Ann Arbor, and the culinary thrills at the Lark in West Bloomfield.

From time to time, Harrison hangs out and sups with movie folk like Harrison Ford, Danny DeVito, or Jack Nicholson. This came about because he writes screenplays now and then — although it is clear here that screenwriting is not one of his favorite activities. He also pals around with famous "foodies" such as the French gourmand-writer Gerard Oberle, and Mario

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Batali of TV's food channel. (At Batali's Babbo in New York, Harrison tells us he once had "what was easily the best meal I have ever had in an American restaurant." It was, he recalls, "a mystical experience" consisting of such tasty treats as calamari, anchovies, lamb's tongue, goose liver ravioli, barbecued squash, grilled quail, duck bacon, and on and on and on.)

Of course, we are to take some of his pronouncements with a soupçon of salt. Could he be kidding us, do you think, when he speaks of "a bill under consideration in the (Michigan) legislature that would allow Republicans to beat poor folks with ... cudgels on Monday afternoon during the ... winter months? And I'm not at all sure that Harrison finished off an entire piglet all by himself, and at one sitting. Or that he and Orson Welles once enjoyed a repast of "a half-pound of bologna with a bottle of Stolichnaya, a salmon in sorrel sauce, sweetbreads en croute, a miniature leg of lamb ... with five wines, desserts, cheeses,

ports." Ah well, who knows? Like many suspected full-of-bologna folk, he's a riot as company.

The book also brings with it a distinct bonus. It contains a memorable recipe for that plain and simple dish (even disdained as downright lowly by some Italians): spaghetti and meatballs.

If you tend toward heartburn and dyspepsia, perhaps it would be best to avoid "The Raw and the Cooked," though. It's one heavily-larded food-and-wine adventure after another, thickly textured and richly flavored (and colored) via Harrison's sometimes fatty prose. Here is a piece titled "Thirty-three Angles on Eating French," for instance. And here is Harrison, railing against the greed of his government, while personally indulging his own appetites to gluttonous extremes. Finally, here is one of the most repellent accounts of a snafu (burp, gulp) dining on a hapless toad you'll ever encounter.

Victoria Diaz is a freelance writer who lives in Livonia.

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While our state benefits from huge gains in local competition, Michiganians still don't receive the best long-distance prices and service around — something that can only come through full telecommunications competition.

According to Consumer Action, AT&T and MCI WorldCom increased their basic rates by as much as 13 percent last year.

In states like Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Kansas, New York and Texas — where full telecommunications competition is underway — consumers are saving millions on local and long-distance calls. New Yorkers alone are saving an estimated \$700 million this year — up to \$324 off some families' phone bills.

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When SBC is approved to offer long-distance service in Michigan, competition will increase, consumers will have more choices, better prices, and innovative services and offerings. It's that simple. Now is the time to open our long-distance market to full competition.

Diane L. Webb

Diane Webb  
Director  
External Affairs

**SBC**  
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Diane Webb

For more information on this and other telecommunications issues, visit [www.connectmichigan.org](http://www.connectmichigan.org).